

Saturday Session
Atlanta Gay Center
November 13, 1982

- I. OPENING--The meeting convened at 9:25am with prayer
- II. INTRODUCTIONS OF DELEGATES NOT ATTENDING THE FRIDAY SESSION were made.
- III. TASK FORCE MEETINGS were held from 9:30 - 10:30am

IV. PLENARY PRELIMINARIES.

The session reconvened at 10:45am.

Joe Chancey was asked to serve as recording secretary.

Marsha Langford was asked to serve as chair.

A camera crew from channel 5 in Atlanta arrived and several delegates volunteered to speak with the reporter.

Several delegates made announcements.

V. PLENARY SESSION # 1

A. NAME FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Many possibilities were discussed. The importance of having the words "Lesbina-Gay" in the title was stressed. Regarding the geographic boundaries which the organization was to encompass the words "North America(n)" were mentioned. Are we to be known as a (highly, tightly) structured group or as an association? Need to be open to Canada and Mexico was supported -- " of the Americas" was favored by many.

Various possible names were enumerated including:

Gay/Lesbian Interfaith Religious Council
" " " " Congress
" " " " Coalition
" " " " Association
" " " " Consortium
Interfaith Gay/Lesbian Religious etc. . . .
Interfaith Lesbian/Gay Religious etc. . . .

After a good deal of further discussion action was TABLED.

- B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE -- TABLED till recommendation came from committee.

C. STRUCTURE TASK FORCE REPORT AND ACTION

1. MAILING ADDRESS--should be central geographically, the Twin Cities were recommended.
2. NAME needs to be easily recognized.
3. STEERING COMMITTEE needs to be elected.
4. STEERING COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES
 - a. Set up 1983 Congress
 - b. Steer mail, act as clearing house, give information, make referrals.
 - c. Publish occasional newsletter and/or mailing about last Congress and what different groups are doing.

- d. Publish directory of member organizations.
Publish general directory of resources, etc.
- e. Implement functions that are adopted.
- f. Put functions into constitution and bylaws and mail to organizations before 1983 Congress at least 30 days in advance of meeting.
- g. Have ability to take stands on political issues.
- h. Send press releases; invite all lesbian/gay religious organizations to 1983 meeting.

It was MOVED, SECONDED, and PASSED THAT VOTING BE DEFERRED UNTIL ALL REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WERE MADE.

FUNCTIONS TASK FORCE REPORT AND ACTION
After a great deal of hard work and much discussion the following was ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS:

I. STRATEGY AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Two areas of concern are seen as primary:

- (A.) Collective sharing and development of strategy related to our interaction with congregations and other religious bodies; and
 - (B.) Intentional nurturing, support, and strengthening of our member groups.
- A. Strategy Development would include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. A sharing within and amongst member groups of strategies and advocacy efforts both those successful and those limited in impact as related to congregations and other religious bodies; and
 - 2. Collective development of coordinated strategies amongst member group so as to advance our faith on a broad, unified front.
 - B. Support of Member Groups would be facilitated by, but not limited to:
 - 1. the encouragement of geographically based interfaith structures such as those which exist in various forms in some metropolitan areas currently.

II. OUTREACH AND SERVICE

The primary emphasis of this Congress will be on the facilitating and development of ministry through our member groups, especially as they exist on a local level. Such efforts may occur through information and resource sharing amongst member groups.

- A. This may be focused on specific TARGET POPULATIONS. (The following groups serve as examples but are neither exhaustive nor listed in a manner suggesting priorities.)
 - 1. Prisoners
 - 2. Students
 - 3. Military personnel
 - 4. Youth . . . especially those aware of an emerging gay/lesbian identity; and those gay male adolescents involved with hustling and prostitution.
 - 5. The aged
 - 6. The disabled and handicapped
 - 7. Racial minorities
 - 8. Parents and families of gay/lesbian persons

9. Bisexually identified
10. Lesbian/gay identified clergy and other spiritual leaders
11. Lesbian/gay economically disadvantaged
12. Spiritually alienated.

- B. Outreach and Service shared cooperatively with groups of similar geographical focus. e.g. The Gay Christian Movement in England.
- C. Effort which are ISSUE RESPONSIVE e.g. specifically related to gay/lesbian concerns such as in the area of "violence" and the "Moral Majority."

NOTE: These efforts may be accomplished either as a "joint effort" across various member groups of the Congress, under direct leadership from the Congress; or the effort may be invested in one (or more) group and supported by the other member groups. In the latter case, the direction of the ministry would be the responsibility of the one group in which it was invested.

III. RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- A. The development of relationships with other primary gay/lesbian identified organizations in whose focus and activities the Congress would have interest. Examples of such groups could include: GRNL, NGTF, Legal Defense Fund, and non-political groups such as those medical organizations working with AIDS.
- B. The development of relationships with other groups of a religious nature in whose focus and activities the Congress would have interest. Examples of such groups could include: the National Council of Churches of Christ, the World Jewish Congress, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Cooperative advertising
- B. Communication within the organization and member groups, as well as more broadly within the religious community. Examples of such could include:
1. Newsbriefs in Congress
 2. Development of a relationship with the publishers of INSIGHT MAGAZINE.
- C. Resource development and distribution. This would include various educational materials such as those related to worship.

V. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT

- A. The initial purpose of this function would be to facilitate and cooperate in the development of leadership within the gay/lesbian religious community. This might be accomplished in events specifically planned and developed by the Congress, or through events of such a nature developed by member groups.
- B. An equally important function is to discover, develop, and implement activities which would provide for the continuing support and care for our leadership with our spiritual groups.

Such activities could be identified and encouraged within our member groups as well as more broadly within the Congress.

VI. RESEARCH AND STUDY

- A. *The purpose of this function would be to assist member groups in the understanding of certain issues affecting our people and the development of response positions which might inform our actions as people/groups of faith. Examples might include issues and situations related to the target populations.*

VII. WORSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- A. *This function would be responsible for the development of worship resources which allow us to celebrate our similarities and which, at the same time, celebrate our uniqueness as a form of richness.*

VIII. ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

- A. *The development of a North American Lesbian and Gay Religious Congress represents an accomplishment of such significance for our people that the history of such an event, and its on-going history, must be carefully preserved for future generations.*

E. FINANCE TASK FORCE REPORT AND ACTION was

TABLED till Sunday when a more complete report could be given.

F. MEMBERSHIP

After a great deal of discussion the following was adopted by VOTE. The vote is detailed in APPENDIX I on page 7. The vote was taken in three parts: (1) regarding parity, (2) whether or not to be an interfaith organization, and (3) on the (rest of) the whole package:

- I. *Membership in the Congress includes:*
 - A. *Denominational Caucuses*
 - B. *International & national gay/lesbian religious groups*
 - C. *Local/regional councils*
 - D. *Independent local groups with recognizable constituencies*
 - E. *Institutionally based gay/lesbian religious groups (E.G. campus groups)*
 - F. *Official heads of gay affirming denominational offices, ex officio, with vote.*
- II. *Delegations of affiliated bodies will represent the total organization rather than local or regional units.*
- III. *Members may have up to three delegates to the Congress. If three sent, the delegation must include at least one woman and at least Third World person. (Third World defined as self-identified Black, Hispanic, Asian (including Asia Minor), Native American, Sephardic or nonEuropean Jew, or Pacific Islander.*
- IV. *Credentials Committee processes applications for membership and delegation make-up to the Congress. Credentials Committee to have five members, which should include two Third World persons (at least one of whom is a woman, and at least one other woman.*
- V. *Committee to be elected by the Congress.*

G. CELEBRATIONS & WORSHIP

The report of the Celebrations & Worship Committee follows. It was ADOPTED by voice vote.

We recommend the formation of a Lesbian/Gay Worship Arts Clearing House, to be located in Pasadena, CA, under the chairship of Marsha Langford.

Worship arts materials for lesbian/gay use, either by adaptation from other sources or by original creation, are to be sent to Marsha at 30 N. Raymond Ave., S-405, Pasadena, CA 91103.

A Lesbian/Gay Worship Arts Committee has been formed comprised of the nine persons that comprised the celebrations workshop.

It will be the function of the committee to facilitate the development of worship materials: (1) that celebrate ourselves as a people in exile, drawing upon the liturgy and literature of oppression; (2) that celebrate, mark, and memorialize important dates and people, our experiences as lesbian and gay religious persons, the joys of coming out, choosing our own identities as whole persons.

We propose that we draw upon such resources and services as are already available, including liturgical and nonliturgical in development of the resource library.

We suggest that guidelines for what is to be recommended or suggested for distribution and usage include non-sexist language, without extremes or pressure, keeping in mind that personal religious experiences which are not intentionally sexist sometimes include the use of traditional language. (God may be seen as personal, not necessarily male) It is essential to appreciate that our corporate experiences are larger than our theological beliefs and understandings.

With regard to the various "ism" issues of which we are aware (sexism, racism, ageism, etc.), we wish to emphasize that the worship arts can help us to go beyond language, to experience the realities which language seeks to express.

It will be the procedure of the L/G.W.A.C.H. to catalogue such materials as it receives, provide a resource list of such materials and publicize their availability to members of the organization. They may then be ordered and paid for etc.

H. STEERING COMMITTEE

It was MOVED, SECONDED, AND PASSED with one abstention that the Steering Committee be empowered to speak on behalf of the Congress.

I. INSIGHT MAGAZINE

It was reported that Insight was no longer being published. Approximately \$200 needed to pay standing debts.

J. NEXT MEETING OF CONGRESS

By CONSENSUS it was agreed that the next meeting of the Congress

would be in the Twin Cities on Columbus Day weekend, 1983.

- K. The afternoon session, much of which was chaired by Margarita Suarez, ADJOURNED.
- L. WORSHIP. At 5:15p.m. a "pot luck" worship service was held. Participants were invited bring something from their respective traditions to share.
- M. At 6:15 p.m. delegates and friends had dinner at the Gallus restaurant.
- N. The Congress RECONVENED at 8:15 p.m.
- O. QUIXOTE CENTER DEFICIT
It was reported that the Quixote Center experienced a deficit of approximately \$1200 after the May, 1982 meeting.
It was MOVED, SECONDED, and PASSED UNANIMOUSLY that the Congress decline responsibility for the deficit.

It was MOVED, SECONDED, and PASSED that Frank Shceuren be authorized to approach the Quixote Center for archival materials regarding the Congress and to interpret our understanding of the situation surrounding the deficit and our decision not to assume financial responsibility for any deficit that the Center may have incurred. (Scheuren abstained on the vote.)

- P. NAME OF ORGNAIZATION.
Again, a great deal of time was spent on trying to choose a name for the organization. No decision was reached. TABLED till Sunday.
- Q. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES/PURPOSE
It was agreed by CONSENSUS that a Statement of Purpose was needed. After discussion the following was ADOPTED:

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1. *To enable cooperation and development withing the Lesbian/Gay interfaith community by facilitating the sharing of resources, tasks and strategies.*
2. *To assert that God affirms Lesbians and Gay men for service and participation in all aspects of religious life.*
3. *To affirm supportive outreach and service furthering human rights, spiritual freedom, justice, liberation and social equality for Lesbians and Gay men.*
4. *Further, we believe that God calls us to oppose constructively homophobia, sexism, racism and other forms of invidious discrimination in our organizations, religious institutions, and in the society as a whole.*

- R. THE SATURDAY SESSION WAS ADJOURNED!!! (at 10:15 P.M.)

APPENDIX I

Since the parity rule was in effect for this meeting each organization had either one, two, or three votes.

organization	1 PARITY	2 INTERFAITH	3 WHOLE PACKAGE MEMBERSHIP REPORT
1. AFFIRMATION (Methodist)	YYY	YYY	YYY
2. UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST COALITION FOR LESBIAN/GAY CONCERNS	YYY	YYY	YYY
3. DIGNITY	YY	YY	YY
4. EVANGELICAL OUTREACH MINISTRIES	NN	NN	NN
5. KINSHIP, SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS	Y	Y	Y
6. UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST OFFICE OF LESBIAN & GAY CONCERNS	Y	Y	Y
7. PENTACOSTAL COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS	Y	Y	Y
8. AXIOS, EASTERN ORLTHODOX CHRISTIANS	N	N	Y
9. INTEGRITY	YY	YY	YY
10. LUTHERANS CONCERNED	Y	Y	Y
11. LESBIAN/GAY INTERFAITH COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA	Y	Y	Y
12. METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH	YY	YY	YY
13. NEW WAYS MINISTRY	Y	Y	Y
14. GAY/LESBIAN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	N	N	Y
15. WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWS	Y	Y	Y
16. WINGSPAN	Y	Y	Y
17. FRIENDS FOR LESBIAN/GAY CONCERNS	N	Y	Y
18. UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS FOR LESBIAN/ GAY CONCERNS	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Y</u>
	YES 21	YES 22	YES 26
	NO 5	NO 4	NO 0

